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AQUAMAN
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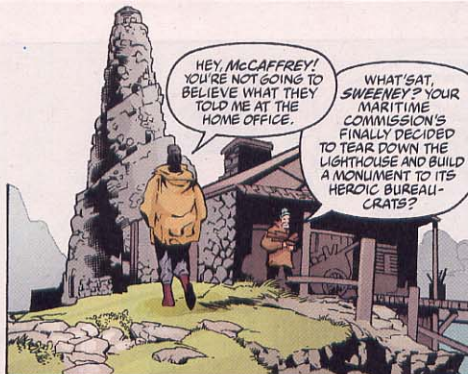
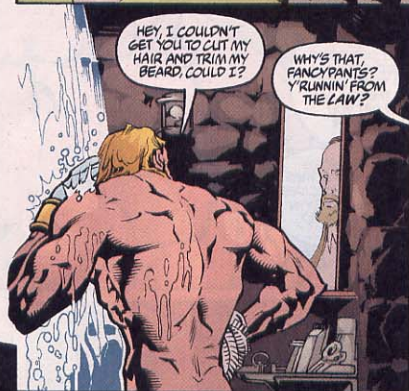
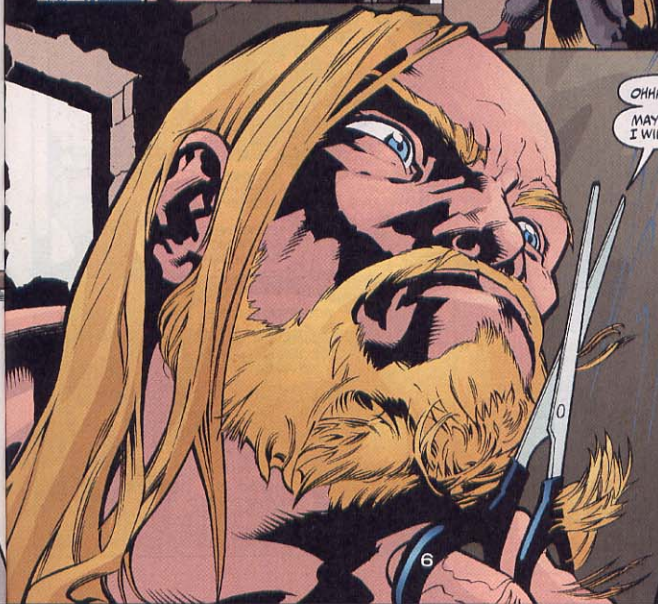
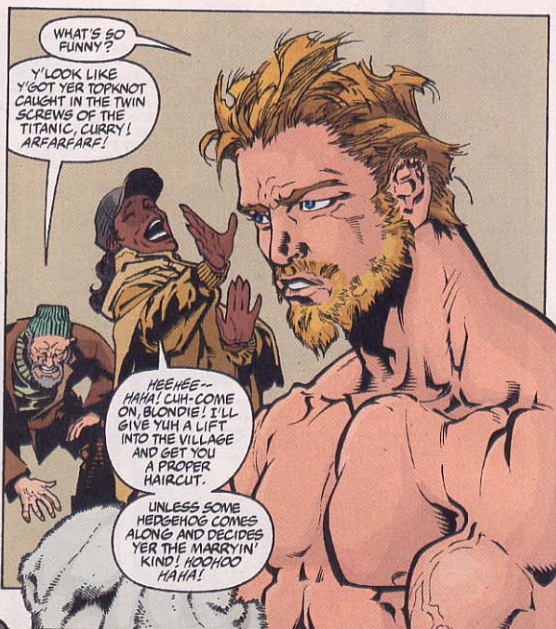
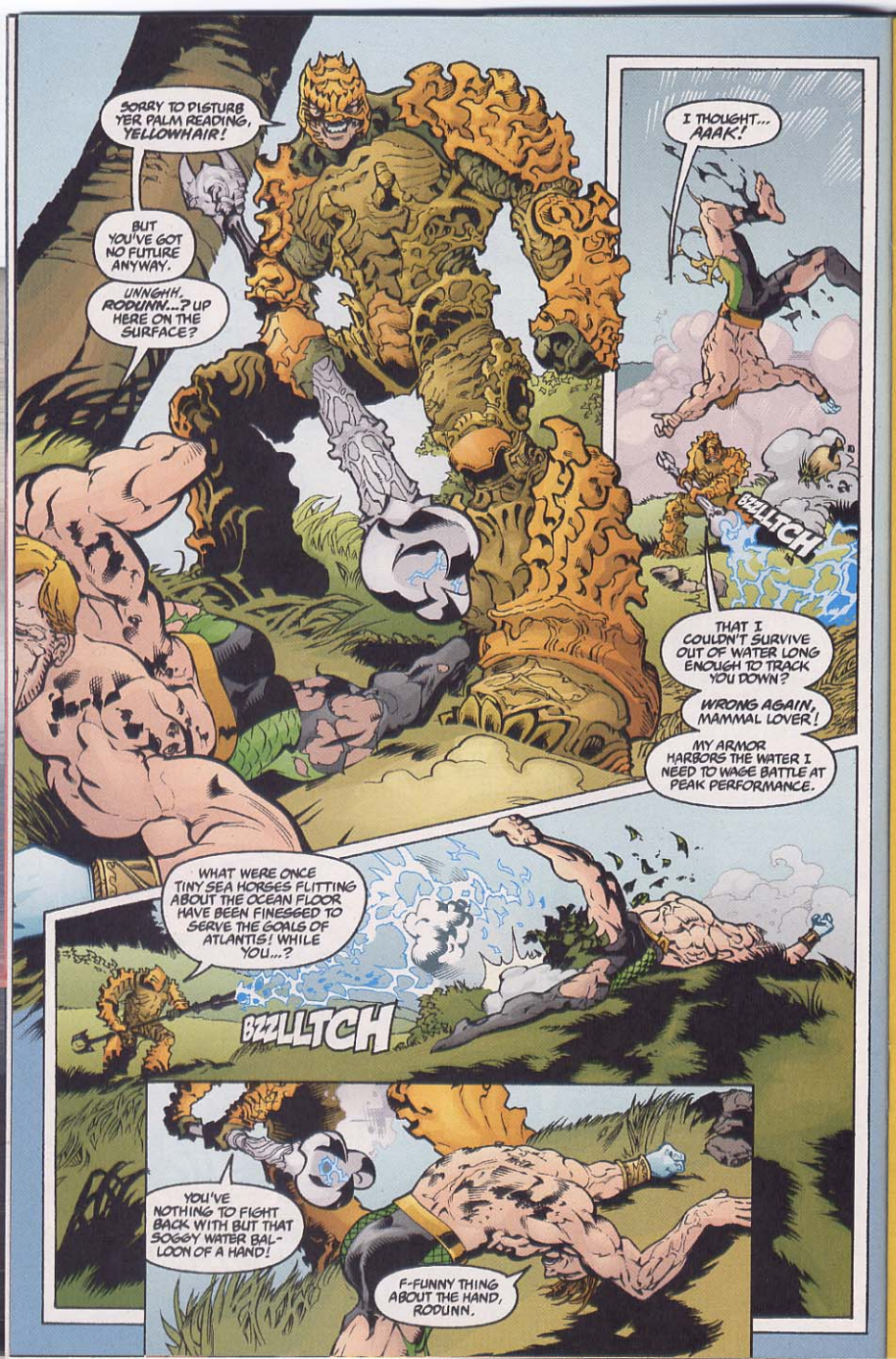
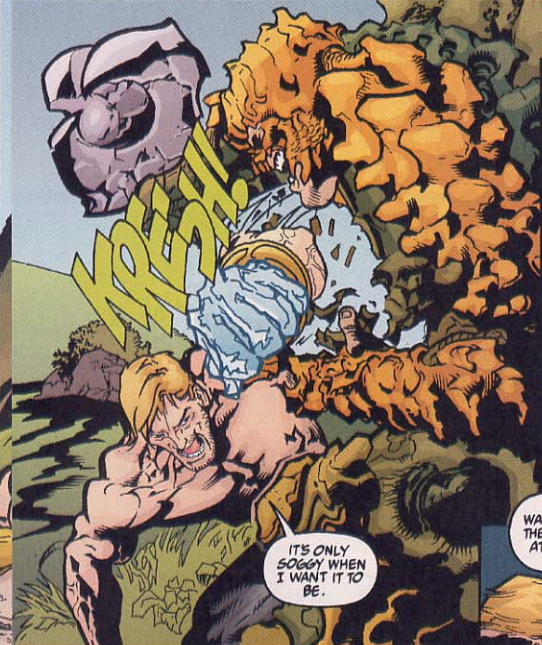
"HAIL, MERA, SUPREME SOUL OF THE SEVEN SEAS.
"RADIANT AND ANOINTED ARCHITECT OF THE NEW ATLANTIS!
"BENEVOLENT AND OMNISCIENT OVERSEER OF THE OCEAN'S CHOSEN PEOPLE."
YOUR HUMBLE SERVANT, RODUNN, BRINGS IGNOBLE TIDINGS.
THE MONGREL DOGFISH, ORIN, HAS SURVIVED TRIAL BY DESICCATION ON TRAITOR'S REEF.

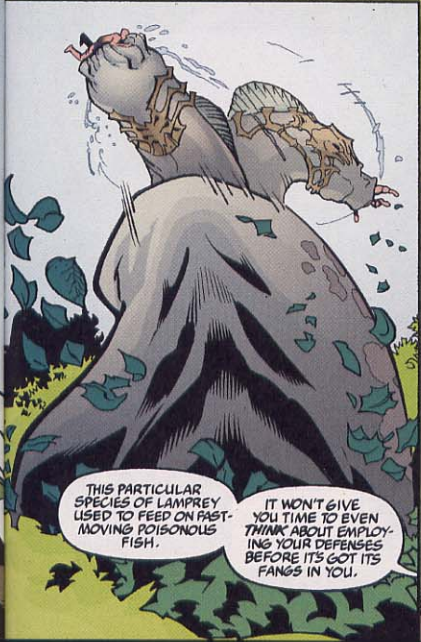
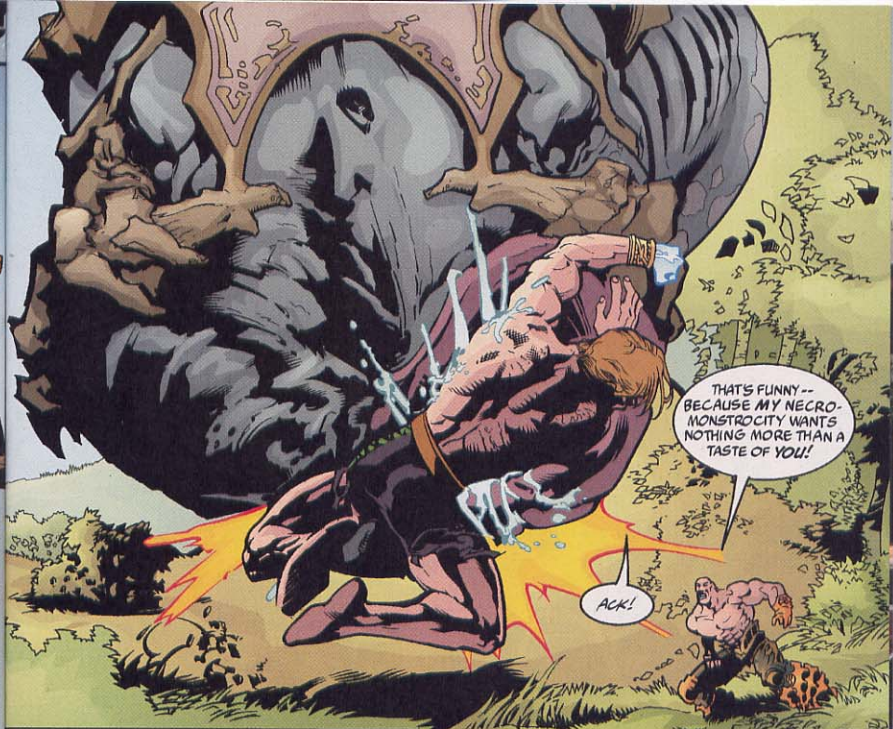
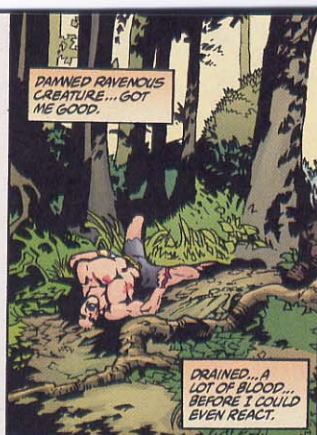
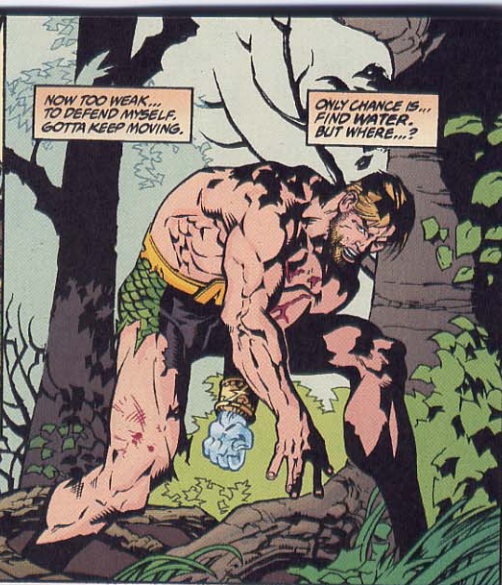
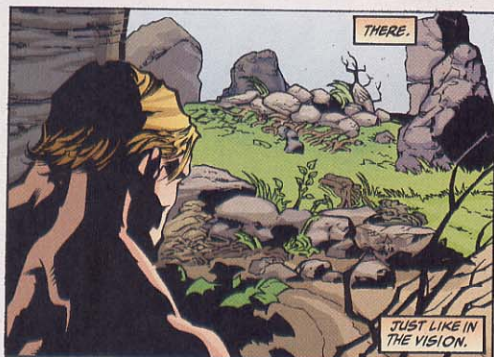
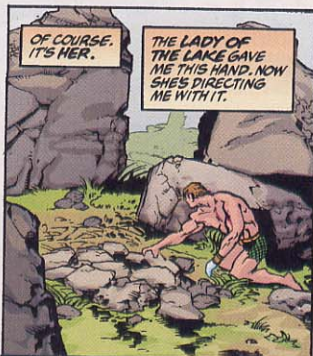
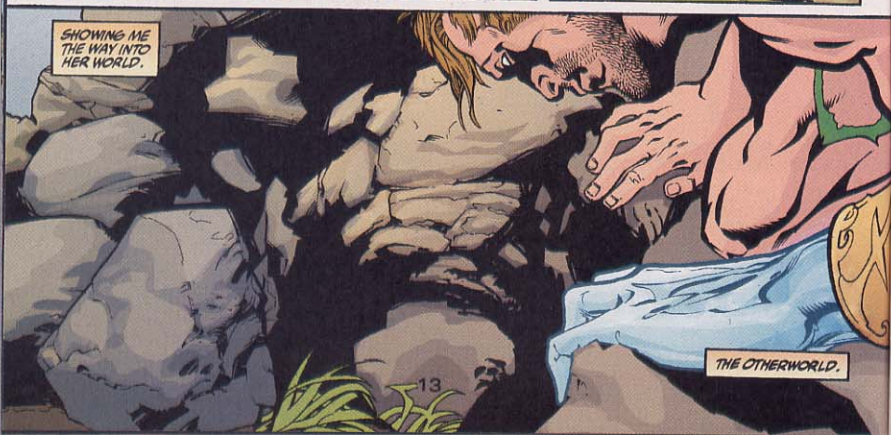
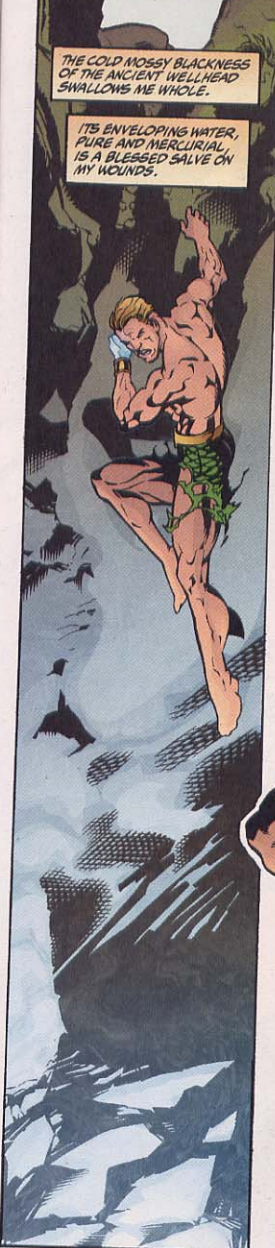
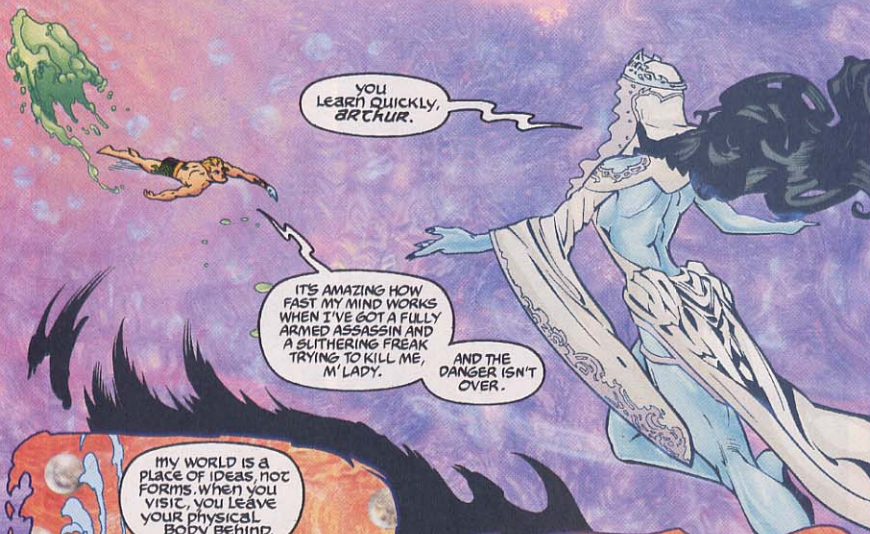
ARE YOU TELLING HER MAJESTY THAT YOU HAVE FAILED TO EXECUTE HER WILL, RODUNN?
AQUAMANCER!
RICK VEITCH WRITER
YVEL GUICHET PENCILLER
MARK PROPST INKER
NATHAN EYRING COLORIST
MIKE HEISLER LETTERER
VALERIE D'ORAZIO ASST. EDITOR
DAN RASPLER EDITOR
AND YOU THINK WE DID NOT KNOW AS MUCH?
BUT HE HAS FOUND SUCCOR UPON THE LAND, WALKING LIKE AN APE AMONG HIS ACCURSED LUNG-COUSINS.
OUR ADEPTS SUSPECT HE HAS ALLIED WITH A NEW AND MYSTERIOUS FORCE, ONE THAT MAY PRESENT A GRAVE CHALLENGE TO THE IMPERIAL THRONE.

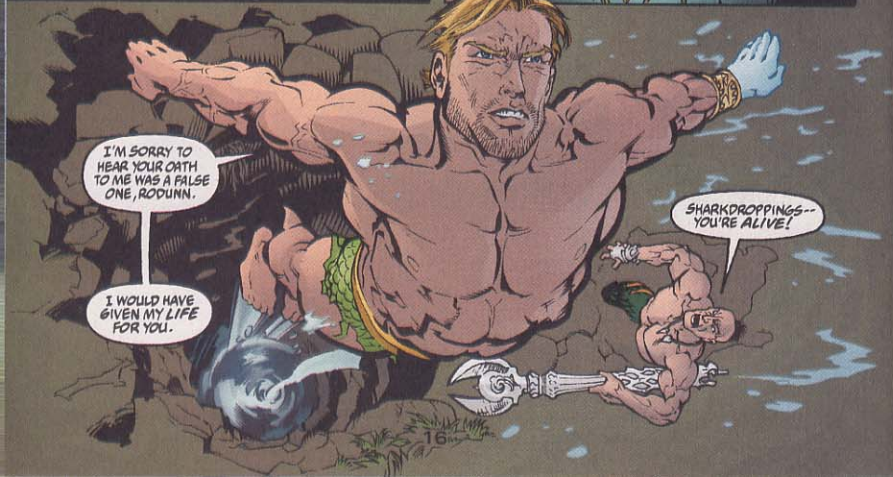
I FEAR SO, HAGEN. OUR SORCERERS HAVE BARRED YELLOWHAIR FROM THE LIFE-GIVING SEA BY TURNING THE FISH AGAINST HIM.
HER RADIANCE WONDERS IF PERHAPS ORIN STILL HOLDS SWAY OVER YOU, RODUNN. AFTER ALL, YOU WERE ONCE SWORN TO PROTECT HIM WITH YOUR LIFE.
NAY! I HATE HIM! I BEG MY EMPRESS -- LET ME ATONE FOR THIS BLOT I HAVE PUT UPON HER HONOR!
I WILL GO AMONG THE SURFACE DWELLERS AND KILL ORIN MYSELF! ONLY THEN WILL I BE FIT TO REGAIN MY PLACE AS CAPTAIN OF THE QUEEN'S GUARD!
YOUR EMPRESS ACKNOWLEDGES YOUR LONG YEARS OF DEDICATION TO THE CROWN.
SHE GRACIOUSLY PROVIDES THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PROVE YOURSELF FREE OF ANY LINGERING FEALTY TO HER PREDECESSOR.
COME...

TO VENTURE FORTH FOR BATTLE UNDER THE BURNING EYE IS NOT AN EASY THING FOR ONE BORN OF ATLANTIS.
FORTUNATELY, OUR OBSIDIAN AGE MASTERS TAUGHT US THE DARK SECRETS OF MUTATING SIMPLE LIFE FORMS TO OUR WILL.
THIS ORGANIC ARMOR WILL PROVIDE WATER RESERVES FOR YOUR CONSTANT HYDRATION AS WELL AS PROTECTION, RODUNN.
I CAN'T WAIT TO GIVE YELLOWHAIR A LOVE TAP WITH THIS!
IT IS THE MOST POWERFUL SHOCK LANCE IN THE ROYAL ARMORY. THEY SAY IT WILL STUN A SPERM WHALE!
BUT A KNIGHT OF THE REALM IS ONLY AS GOOD AS HIS CHARGER, RODUNN!
SO WE HAVE BRED YOU A STEED THAT WILL MAKE YOUR ENEMY'S BLOOD RUN COLD.
BEFORE IT FEASTS ON IT, THAT IS.
HAH! THE LOWLY BLOODSUCKING SEA LAMPREY BECOMES THE AVENGING SPIRIT OF NEW ATLANTIS!
REDEEM YOURSELF, RODUNN! GO TO THE SURFACE. FIND AND END THIS THREAT TO IMPERIAL RULE!
I RIDE FOR THE GREATER GLORY OF OUR QUEEN.
LET THE TRAITOR, ORIN, PONDER AND FEAR THE STRONG MAILED FIST OF THE NEW ATLANTIS!

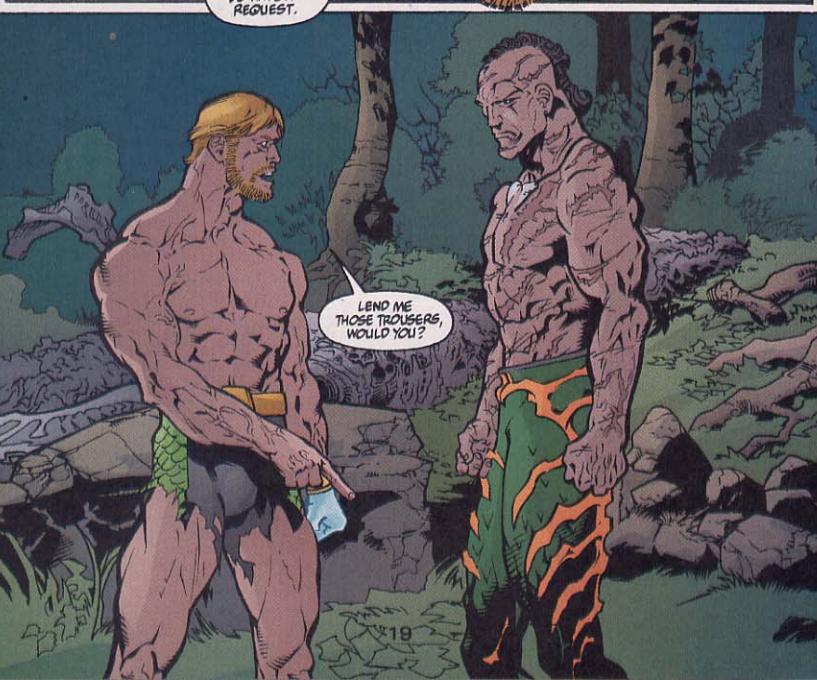
MIZEN HEAD, WESTERN IRELAND.
THE TELEPATHIC CONNECTION TO MY NEW HAND IS DEEPENING.
YESTERDAY, I SAW A VISION UNFOLD WITHIN ITS WATERY FORM.
BY MANIPULATING ITS MOLECULAR STRUCTURE WITH MY THOUGHTS, I CAN EASILY INCREASE ITS SURFACE TENSION.
I BET I COULD MAKE IT AS SOLID AS STEEL IF I TRIED.
DON'T GO DRINKIN' THAT TAP WATER, CURRY! NOT UNLESS YOU WANT A BAD CASE OF THE BELLY GRIPES.
WHY'S THAT, McCAFFREY? IS YOUR WELL POLLUTED?
NAH. JUST SALTY. AIN'T NO FRESH GROUNDWATER THIS FAR OUT ON THE POINT. WE LUG IN BOTTLES FER DRINKIN'.
NOT THAT I HAVE MUCH USE FER THE STUFF M'SELF, Y'UNDERSTAND.
SO THE PLUMBING JUST PIPES IN DIRECT FROM THE SEA?
YEP. HEAT IT ON THE WOODSTOVE. USE IT FER BATHIN' AND DOIN' DISHES.
AND FLUSHIN' THE POET'S THRONE. ALL THE COMFORTS OF HOME OUT HERE ON MIZEN HEAD!
THEN, I COULD JUST TAKE A SALT WATER SHOWER HERE? ANYTIME I WANT?
SURE! AS LONG AS Y'CHOP THE WOOD AND KEEP THE STOVE FIRED.
SO MAYBE YE'LL BE STAYIN' ON T'HELP ME RUN THINGS?
YES. I THINK I WILL.

HEY, McCAFFREY! YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BELIEVE WHAT THEY TOLD ME AT THE HOME OFFICE.
WHAT'SAT, SWEENEY? YOUR MARITIME COMMISSION'S FINALLY DECIDED TO TEAR DOWN THE LIGHTHOUSE AND BUILD A MONUMENT TO ITS HEROIC BUREAU-CRATS?
NOPE! THEY'RE GIVIN' YOU ALL CREDIT FOR SAVING THE ABERDEEN CASTLE FROM GOIN' TO GROUND IN THAT STORM YESTERDAY.
THEY WANT TO FIX UP THE LIGHT AND KEEP IT OPERATING. MIZEN HEAD'S GONNA LOOK SHARP AGAIN.
SWEENEY? IS THAT YOU?
HEY, I COULDN'T GET YOU TO CUT MY HAIR AND TRIM MY BEARD, COULD I?
WHY'S THAT, FANCYPANTS? Y'RUNNIN' FROM THE LAW?
NO, NO. IT'S JUST... TIME FOR A CHANGE, I GUESS.
WHO DO YOU THINK I AM, YER FAFFIN' GIRLFRIEND?
CUT YER OWN DAMN HAIR!
OHHH-KAY.
MAYBE I WILL.

WELL...
HOW DO I LOOK?
UH...UH...
EHHH...
WHAT'S SO FUNNY?
Y'LOOK LIKE Y'GOT YER TOPKNOT CAUGHT IN THE TWIN SCREWS OF THE TITANIC, CURRY! ARFARFARF!
HEEHEE-- HAHA! CUH-COME ON, BLONDIE! I'LL GIVE YUH A LIFT INTO THE VILLAGE AND GET YOU A PROPER HAIRCUT.
UNLESS SOME HEDGEHOG COMES ALONG AND DECIDES YER THE MARRYIN' KIND! HOOHOO HAHA!
LOOK AT YA' NOW! GET RID OF THE MATTRESS AND YOU'D ALMOST THINK THERE'S A MEMBER OF THE HUMAN RACE UNDER THERE!
YOU KNOW SOMETHING, SWEENEY?
YOU'RE NOT THE FIRST PERSON TO MAKE THAT MISTAKE.
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT. IT'S NOT THAT FUNNY.
SUH-SORRY, BLONDIE. BUT AFTER THAT LOAD OF COD-SWALLOP ABOUT YOU BEIN' THE EXILED KING OF ATLANTIS, IT'S AWFUL HARD TO KEEP A STRAIGHT FACE!
SO WHO THE HELL ARE YA', REALLY?
WOULD YOU BELIEVE ME IF I SAID I WAS A FOUNDING MEMBER OF THE JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA?
ABOUT AS MUCH AS IF YOU'D TOLD ME YOU'D BEEN VISITING OLD ANNWN ITSELF!

ANNWN? WHAT'S THAT?
IN THE ANCIENT TIMES, ANNWN WAS THE IDYLLIC OTHERWORLD. IT HELD MYSTIC ENERGIES THAT COULD HEAL THE SICK.
I'VE GOT AN INTEREST IN THAT SORT OF THING. WHEN I WAS AT UNIVERSITY I MINORED IN CELTIC AND DRUID MYTHOLOGY.
HEAL THE SICK, YOU SAY? HOW DOES ONE FIND THIS OTHERWORLD?
WELL, ANNWN'S JUST A BLOODY MYTH NOW, ISN'T IT? BUT THE OLD TEXTS SPEAK OF MAGICAL WELLS BEIN' THE USUAL ENTRYWAYS.
LEGEND HAD ONE AROUND THESE PARTS, I'VE HEARD. THERE'S QUITE A FEW DRUIDIC STANDING STONES IN THE AREA, TOO.
WATCH IT! SOMETHING'S IN THE ROAD AHEAD!
IT'S A MAN! AND HE'S HURT!
SKEEEECH!
IT'S ONE OF THE LOCAL VILLAGERS. BEEN HIT BY A CAR, HAS HE?
NO. FROM THE WOUND ON HIM, I'D SAY HE'S BEEN BITTEN. AND LOST QUITE A LOT OF BLOOD.
SOMETHING GOT HOLD OF HIM. SOMETHING MONSTROUS.
OOUNNGHH...
TAKE HIM STRAIGHT TO A HOSPITAL. I'M GOING TO HAVE A LOOK AROUND HERE.
NOW, IS THAT THE WISE THING TO BE DOIN', BLONDIE?
I MEAN, IF IT'S MONSTROUS--YOU SURE YOU WANT TO BE OUT HERE ALL ALONE WITH IT?
THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I WANT.

WHATEVER GLOMMED ONTO THAT POOR DEVIL ISN'T PART OF THE NATURAL WORLD.
PERHAPS IF I CAN STIMULATE ANOTHER VISION, I'LL GET AN IDEA WHAT I'M UP AGAINST.
OKAY. THOUGHTS POISED. ARCH. DIVE IN.
(SHIFTING. SWIRLING. FORMING...)
(SEEING.)
STANDING STONES. JUST LIKE SWEENEY MENTIONED.
THE ANCIENT CELTS USED THEM IN THEIR RELIGIOUS CERE-MONIES. RAISED THEM IN A CIRCLE...
SOMETIMES AROUND A WELL.
INTERESTING. BUT SO FAR, NO SIGN OF ANY THREATENING--
arthur-- look out!
AAAAYAAGH!
BZZZCRT!

SORRY TO DISTURB YER PALM READING, YELLOWHAIR!
BUT YOU'VE GOT NO FUTURE ANYWAY.
UNNGHH. RODUNN...? UP HERE ON THE SURFACE?
I THOUGHT... AAAK!
BZZLLTCH
THAT I COULDN'T SURVIVE OUT OF WATER LONG ENOUGH TO TRACK YOU DOWN?
WRONG AGAIN, MAMMAL LOVER!
MY ARMOR HARBORS THE WATER I NEED TO WAGE BATTLE AT PEAK PERFORMANCE.
WHAT WERE ONCE TINY SEA HORSES FLITTING ABOUT THE OCEAN FLOOR HAVE BEEN FINESSED TO SERVE THE GOALS OF ATLANTIS! WHILE YOU...?
BZZLLTCH
YOU'VE NOTHING TO FIGHT BACK WITH BUT THAT SOGGY WATER BAL-LOON OF A HAND!
F-FUNNY THING ABOUT THE HAND, RODUNN.

KRESH!
IT'S ONLY SOGGY WHEN I WANT IT TO BE.
SMOSH!
AND RIGHT NOW I'VE DECIDED IT'S GOING TO BE HARD ENOUGH TO BREAK YOUR JAW!
FLAIL ALL YOU WANT, YELLOWHAIR! THE GREAT SORCERY OF ATLANTIS PROTECTS ME!
I GUESS YOU'VE FORGOTTEN WHAT I DID TO THE LAST ABOMINATION THOSE DEMONOLOGISTS CONJURED?
AGH! WHAT ARE YOU...?
AAGHH! DAMN YOU, YELLOWHAIR! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
TH-THE ARMOR. I-IT'S GETTING TIGHTER. SH-SHRINKING ON ME.
IT'S WHAT I'M UNDOING, RODUNN.
AHH! AAK!
I STAND AGAINST CYNICAL WITCHERY THAT TURNS THE WONDERS OF NATURE INTO NECRO-MONSTROSITIES!
SUCH SACRILEGE LEAVES A BAD TASTE IN MY MOUTH!

THAT'S FUNNY-- BECAUSE MY NECRO-MONSTROCITY WANTS NOTHING MORE THAN A TASTE OF YOU!
ACK!
THIS PARTICULAR SPECIES OF LAMPREY USED TO FEED ON FAST-MOVING POISONOUS FISH.
IT WON'T GIVE YOU TIME TO EVEN THINK ABOUT EMPLOY-ING YOUR DEFENSES BEFORE IT'S GOT ITS FANGS IN YOU.
AND DRUNK ITS FILL!

DAMNED RAVENOUS CREATURE...GOT ME GOOD.
DRAINED...A LOT OF BLOOD... BEFORE I COULD EVEN REACT.
NOW TOO WEAK... TO DEFEND MYSELF. GOTTA KEEP MOVING.
ONLY CHANCE IS... FIND WATER. BUT WHERE...?

THE COLD MOSSY BLACKNESS OF THE ANCIENT WELLHEAD SWALLOWS ME WHOLE.
ITS ENVELOPING WATER, PURE AND MERCURIAL, IS A BLESSED SALVE ON MY WOUNDS.
BUT IF I'M RIGHT, THIS WELL IS MUCH MORE THAN A SHAFT SUNK DEEP IN THE EARTH.
IT'S A PORTAL INTO A PLACE THE ANCIENT PEOPLE WHO LIVED HERE KNEW AS ANNWN.
A PLACE I CALL THE SECRET SEA.

YOU LEARN QUICKLY, ARTHUR.
IT'S AMAZING HOW FAST MY MIND WORKS WHEN I'VE GOT A FULLY ARMED ASSASSIN AND A SLITHERING FREAK TRYING TO KILL ME, M'LADY.
AND THE DANGER ISN'T OVER.
MY WORLD IS A PLACE OF IDEAS, NOT FORMS. WHEN YOU VISIT, YOU LEAVE YOUR PHYSICAL BODY BEHIND.
THAT WELL WATER WAS HELPING TO RESTORE ME, BUT I'M PRETTY BUSTED UP AND VULNERABLE BACK THERE.
IS THERE ANYTHING YOU CAN DO TO HELP ME DEFEAT MY ATTACKER?
HEARTS FILLED WITH ANGER DEFEAT THEMSELVES, WATERBEARER.
YOUR HAND IS A GIFT; ONE THAT MUST NEVER BE RAISED AS A WEAPON.
IT IS ONE WITH MY OWN. THROUGH IT THE HEALING OF THE WORLD BEGINS.
LET HIM WHO CALLS YOU ENEMY FEEL ITS TOUCH FIRST AND FOREMOST.

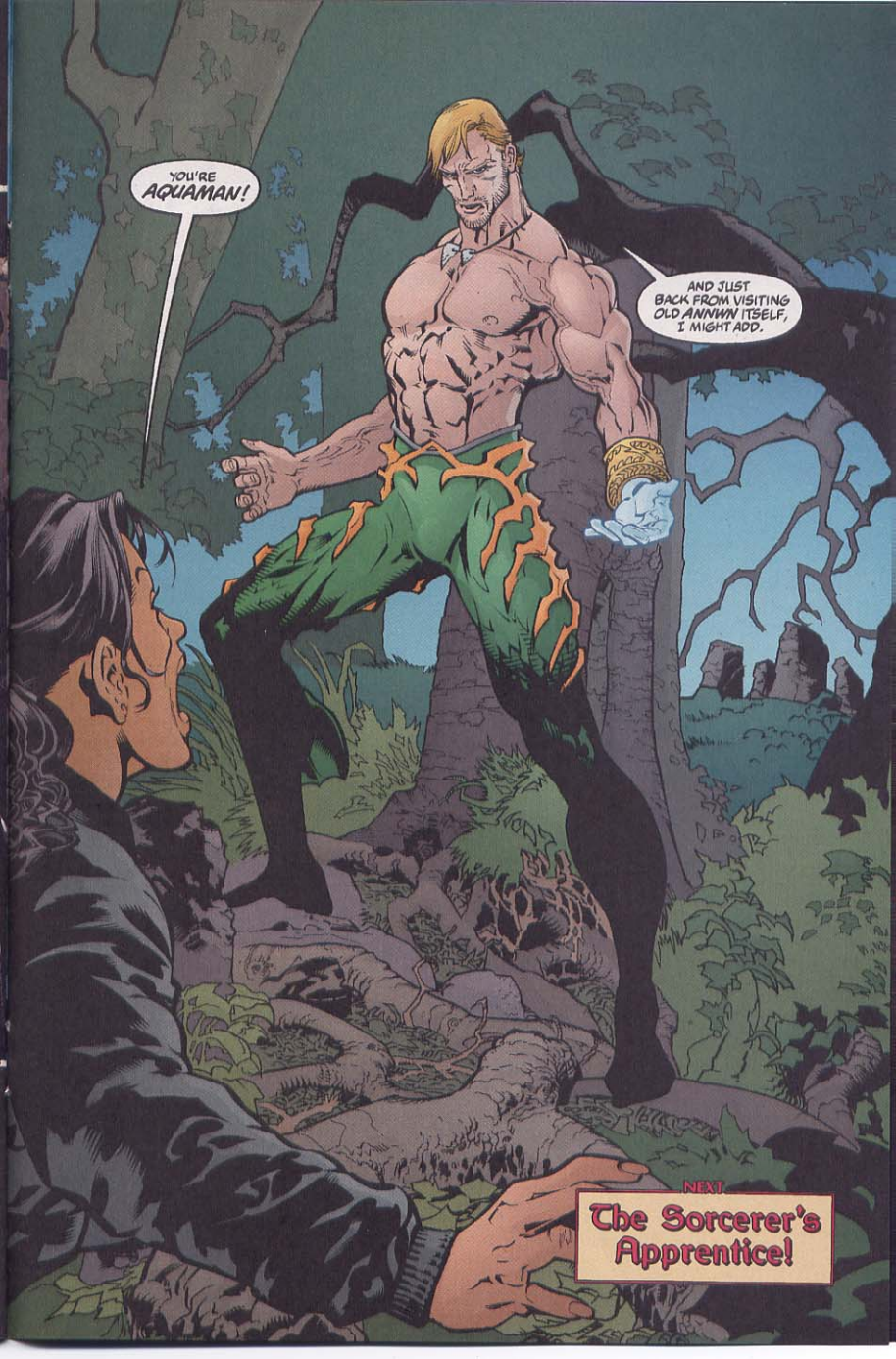
I ALWAYS HATED YOUR AIR-BREATHING GUTS, YELLOWHAIR!
AS CAPTAIN OF YOUR IMPERIAL GUARD, I MAY HAVE BEEN SWORN TO DEFEND YOU, BUT I WAS ALWAYS LAUGHING BEHIND YOUR BACK.
YOU WERE SUCH A POMPOUS ASS.
I CHEERED THE DAY THEY ORDERED YOUR EXECUTION AND FREED ME FROM MY OATH TO YOU!
SO LET IT BE MY DISTINCT PLEASURE TO REPAY YOU FOR THE YEARS I WASTED JUMPING AT YOUR BECK AND CALL...
BY STUFFING YOUR CARCASS IN A SHALLOW DIRT GRAVE FROM WHICH YOU'LL NEVER...
...RISE?
I'M SORRY TO HEAR YOUR OATH TO ME WAS A FALSE ONE, RODUNN.
I WOULD HAVE GIVEN MY LIFE FOR YOU.
SHARKDROPPINGS--YOU'RE ALIVE!

AND YOUR WOUNDS ARE HEALED! E-EVEN AFTER THAT LAMPREY FEASTED ON YOUR BLOOD!
SOMETHIN' AIN'T RIGHT HERE!
RODUNN-- WAIT. BEHIND YOU...
YOU'RE IN LEAGUE WITH SOME KIND OF DEVILS! I KNOW IT, I...
LOOK OUT!
NAAAOOOWWWMMFFF!
RODUNN! HANG ON--I'M COMING!
RODUNN'S MUFFLED SCREAMS RISE LIKE THOSE OF A PATHETIC CHILD IN A SUDDEN UNCONTROLLED PANIC.
THE CREATURE MOVES SO FAST, IT TAKES PRECIOUS SECONDS TO GET MY HAND ON IT AND FOCUS MY TELEPATHY.
AND DEFLATE THE DARK SORCERY THAT CORRUPTED AND ENSLAVED IT.

IF ONLY HELPING MY OLD CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD COULD BE SO SIMPLE.
RODUNN, YOU KNOW I ALWAYS TRUSTED YOU.
WHAT POSSESSED YOU TO TURN SO VIOLENTLY AGAINST ME?
I'M SORRY... GASSP... SO SORRY...
IN TRUTH IT WAS NO MYSTIC SPELL... GASSSP... NOR EVEN ANGER AT HOW YOU SANK ATLANTIS.
THE CULPRIT WAS THE FETID STEW... GASSP... THAT HAS ALWAYS STEEPED IN THE CAULDRON OF RODUNN'S OWN BLACK HEART.
FOR YOU, MY KING... WERE EVERYTHING... THAT I WAS NOT.
LET ME END IT... UP HERE... WHEEZING ON THIN AIR LIKE A FISH ON THE SAND.
I-I DON'T EVEN DESERVE THE HONOR... GASSSSSPP... OF AN ATLANTEAN WARRIOR'S UNDERSEA DEATH.
ENOUGH FIGHTING MEN HAVE BEEN LOST TO THE CAUSE OF FALSE HONOR, RODUNN. BOTH ABOVE AND BELOW.
WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS NOW IS A WOMAN'S TOUCH.

M-MY PAIN IS GONE. MY ENERGY RETURNED. I AM HEALED!
WHAT IS THIS HAND YOU LAY UPON ME?
WHAT ARE YOU?
I CAN'T ANSWER THAT, RODUNN. AT LEAST NOT YET.
ALL I KNOW IS I'M NOT THE SAME MAN YOU EXILED ON TRAITOR'S REEF THREE DAYS AGO.
MASTER! I BEG YOUR FORGIVENESS.
SMITE ME WHERE I KNEEL! MY LIFE IS YOURS!
I SEEK NO RETRIBUTION, RODUNN. BUT I DO HAVE A REQUEST.
RETURN TO ATLANTIS. LET MY PEOPLE KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN.
TELL THEM I DO NOT TURN A BLIND EYE TO THE DARKNESS THAT HAS DESCENDED UPON THEM.
AND ONE OTHER THING...
LEND ME THOSE TROUSERS, WOULD YOU?

HEY-- FANCYPANTS?

YOU AROUND?

BLONDIE? I GOT THE GUY TO HOSPITAL IN THE NICK OF TIME. THEY'RE GIVING HIM BLOOD. HE'S GOING TO BE OKAY.
THE DOCTORS DON'T HAVE A CLUE WHAT BIT INTO HIM. SO I CAME BACK TO SEE IF YOU'RE--
GOOD NEWS! GOOD NEWS!

AGHH!
WH-WHO ARE *YOU*?
I AM THE *MESSENGER*!
I CARRY THE *WORD* FOR MY LIEGE!
HE HAS TOUCHED ME WITH HIS RESURGENT POWER! FILLED ME WITH THE VITALITY OF HIS TRUE ESSENCE!
I WAS LOST! BROKEN! BUT HE HAS MADE ME WHOLE!

I GO TO BRING TIDINGS OF MY MASTER'S GLORIOUS WORK TO HIS SUBJECTS!
AND WARN THE USURPERS OF HIS RULE THAT A TERRIBLE RETRIBUTION IS AT HAND!
WHAT SUBJECTS? WHO ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
NONE OTHER THAN ORIN-- THE TRUE KING OF ATLANTIS!
KING OF...?
OH, SWEET BRIDGET...
B-BLONDIE?
OVER HERE, SWEENEY.
THAT STUFF YOU WERE FEEDIN' ME ABOUT ATLANTIS AND THE JUSTICE LEAGUE. I-IT WASN'T CODSWALLOP, WAS IT?
YOU'RE THE FISH GUY...

YOU'RE AQUAMAN!
AND JUST BACK FROM VISITING OLD ANNWN ITSELF, I MIGHT ADD.
NEXT
The Sorcerer's Apprentice!